

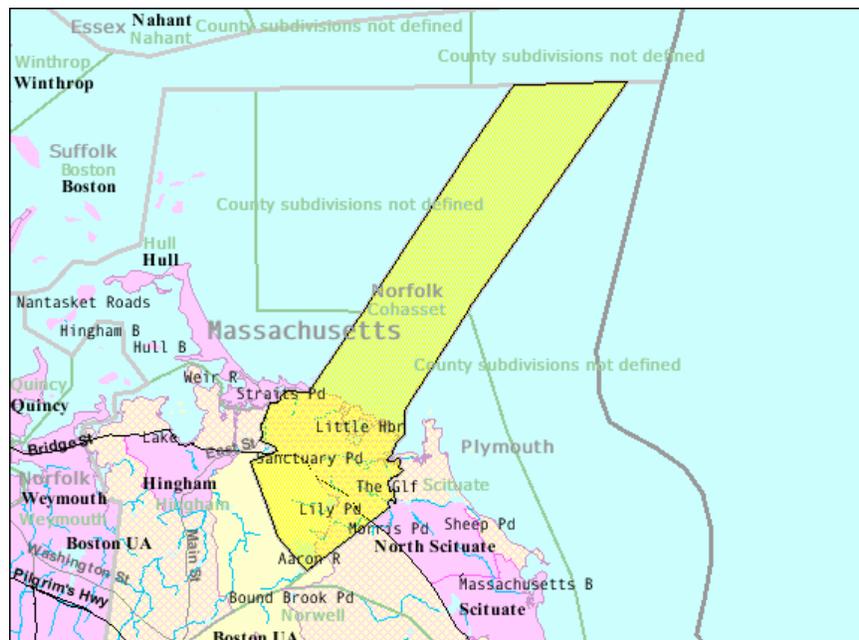
COHASSET, MA¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The Town of Cohasset (42.24° N, 70.80° W) is located in the South Shore region of Massachusetts, in Norfolk County, 25 miles south of Boston (USGS 2008). Cohasset faces Massachusetts Bay and is bordered by Hingham on the west Hull on the Northwest, and Scituate on the south and east (Map 1). It encompasses 31.47 square miles, of which 9.89 square miles is land, and 21.58 square miles is water (State of Massachusetts 2007).



Map 1. Location of Cohasset, MA. (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

The name Cohasset comes from a Native American word “Quonahasset” meaning “long rocky place”. It was originally part of Hingham and was an agriculture community from 1670 until 1770 when it was incorporated. In the 18th and 19th centuries the major industries were shipbuilding, trading, and fishing. The mackerel industry was lucrative in the mid-1800s and in the late 1800s Cohasset began to develop into a summer area for wealthy families in Boston who built large estates along the shoreline (Cohasset Historical Society 2006). Minot Light is a well-known lighthouse off Cohasset; the first lighthouse was built here in 1850 (D’Entremont 2007). Cohasset is also home to the first official lifesaving station built in the United States. In 1807,

¹ These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

² For purposes of citation please use the following template: “Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov.”

the Humane Society of Massachusetts sanctioned the establishment of a lifesaving station; these early lifesaving stations and the crews that manned them eventually grew into the United States Coast Guard.³

Demographics⁴

According to Census 2000 data, Cohasset had a total population of 7,261, up 2.6% from the reported population of 7,075 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this total in 2000, 51.8% were female and 48.2% were male. The median age was 40.9 years and 70.4% of the population was 21 years or older while 17.6% was 62 or older.

The population structure by sex for Cohasset (see Figure 1) shows the largest percentage of residents in 2000 were in the 40-49 age category, followed closely by 30-39 and 50-59. There were a large number of children and young adults under the age of 20 in Cohasset, indicating this was a family-oriented community. There was a sharp decline in the number of residents in the 20-29 age group typical of many fishing communities, as young people leave the community in search of jobs or to go to school.

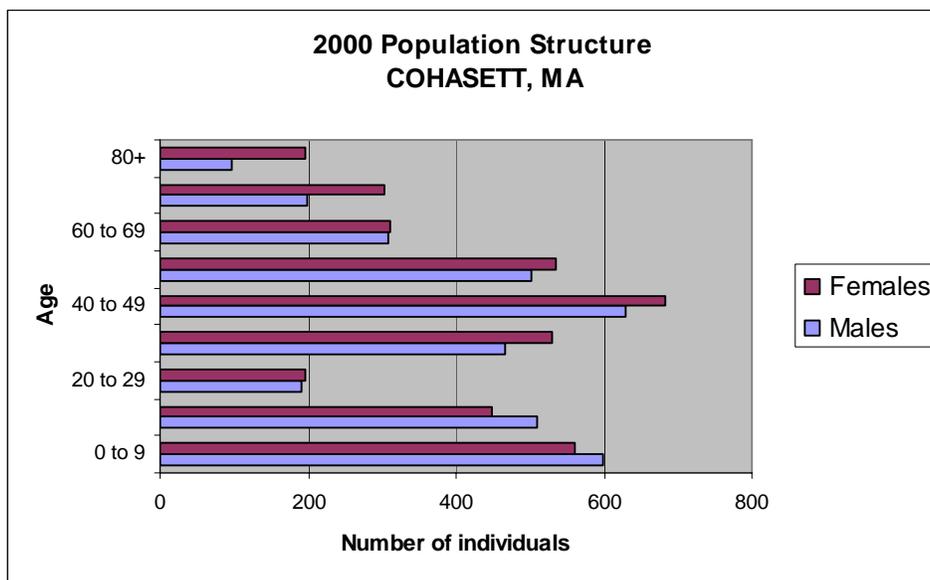


Figure 1. Cohasset's population structure by sex in 2000

The majority of the population of Cohasset was white (98.2%), with 0.2% of residents black or African American, 0.3% Native American, 1.0% Asian, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 0.7% of residents identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their heritage to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (40.4%), English (22.3%), Italian (13.0%), and German (7.7%). With regard to region of birth, 67.0% were born in Massachusetts, 27.8% were born in a different state and 4.6% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2.4% who were not United States citizens).

³ Profile review comments, Jack Buckley, Center for Student Coastal Research, 40 Parker Ave., Cohasset, MA, October 12, 2006

⁴ While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.

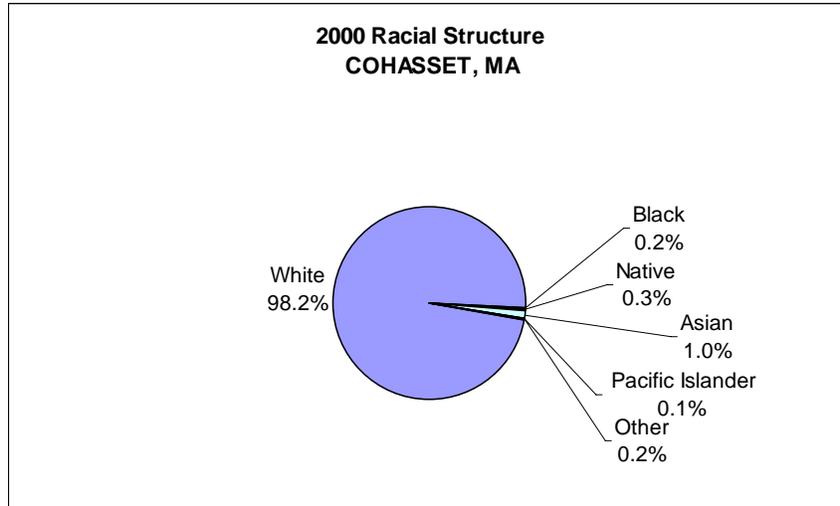


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

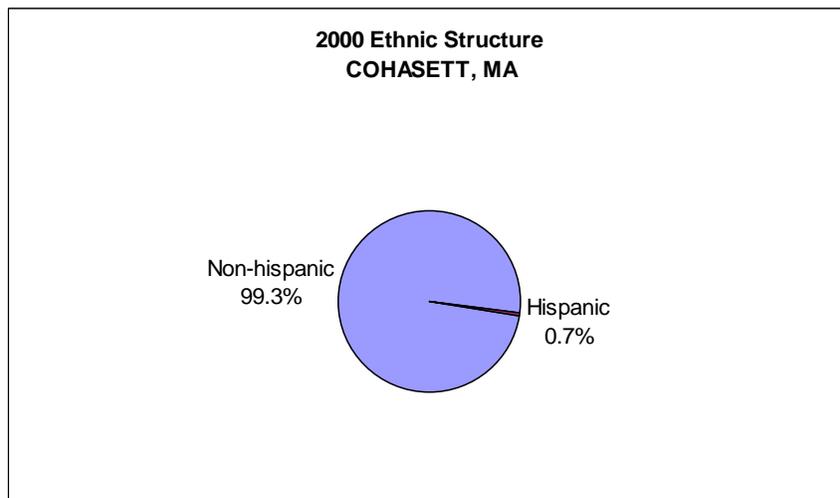


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.6% of the population 5 years old and higher, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 4.4% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 0.1% of the population who spoke English less than 'very well'.

Of the population 25 years and over, 97.2% were high school graduates or higher and 60.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 0.2% did not reach ninth grade, 2.6% attended some high school but did not graduate, 14.5% completed high school, 14.9% had some college with no degree, 7.1% received their associate's degree, 40.0% earned their bachelor's degree, and 20.7% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA) in 2000 the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Norfolk County was Catholic with 63 congregations and 380,930 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Jewish (41 with 38,300 adherents), United Church of Christ (36 with 15,050 adherents) and Episcopal (31 with 12,778 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 10.4% from 1990 (ARDA

2000).

There are six places of worship listed in Cohasset, of which four are Protestant, one is Catholic, and one is Greek Orthodox (Cohasset Chamber of Commerce 2006).

Issues/Processes

As of 2004 the reworking and use of coastal areas related to their zoning was at the forefront of concerns in Cohasset. It was reported in 2004 that “Fishermen of Cohasset are facing the probable loss of their only buyer and their marine railway; they do not feel valued by their community.” The commercial fishermen of Cohasset depend on the marine railway and the Cohasset Lobster Pound to sell their catch, but the property housing the lobster pound had been purchased, and it was unclear whether the lobster pound would continue to be a tenant. In addition dramatic increases in rent at the marina seriously threaten fishermen in the community (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

The Cohasset Harbor Estuary has seen a significant decline in its water quality in recent years. The Cohasset Harbor Health Committee identified losses in shellfish, degradation of the benthic community and sediment quality, and lobster mortality as problems in the harbor (State of Massachusetts 2006). In addition, bacterial pollution has been an on-going problem, with a significant amount of data collected by students, residents, and state and federal officials. Significant attention has been devoted during the past year to stormwater pollution, the management of stormwater, and the need for a by-law to proactively prevent any increased stormwater flows to the harbor. Finally, flushing capacity of the Inner Cove and its ability to handle any increased discharges from the wastewater treatment plant is an issue of critical importance to the Harbor Health Committee, the fishing community, and the fishing industry. Increased nitrogen loading and increased freshwater flows in a poorly or slowly flushed cove are worrisome for the coastal community and its fishing industry.⁵

Cultural attributes

Cohasset is home to the [South Shore Music Circus](#), an in the round tent, entertainment venue. Many world famous performers have been guests to the Music Circus over the years. The Music Circus and its sister venue the Cape Cod Melody Tent “are owned and operated by the South Shore Playhouse Associates, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to encouraging and supporting the arts, cultural and educational organizations throughout the communities of the South Shore and Cape Cod.” The [South Shore Arts Center](#) offers education and performance space and has an Arts Festival planned for June 2007.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁶, 65.2% (3,564 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over are in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 1.0% are unemployed, none are in the Armed Forces, and 64.2% are employed.

⁵ Profile review comments, Jack Buckley, Center for Student Coastal Research, 40 Parker Ave., Cohasset, MA, October 12, 2006

⁶ Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

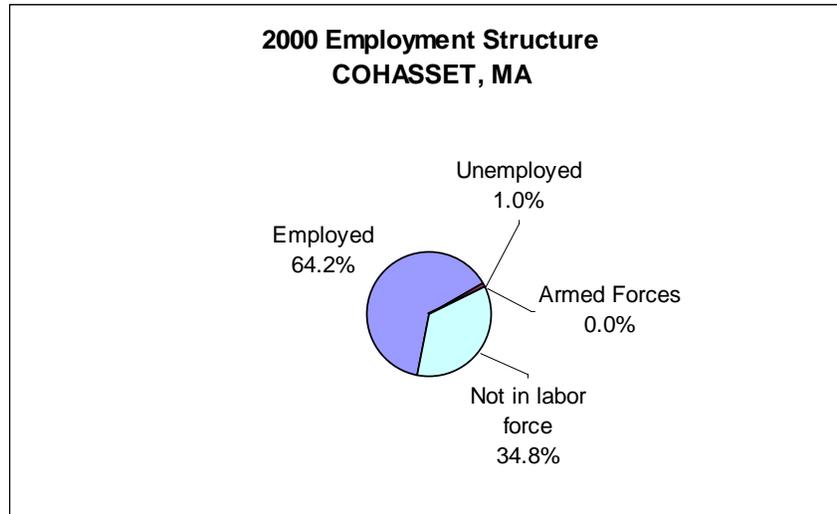


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 9 positions or 0.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 333 positions or 9.5% of jobs. Education, health, and social services (21.4%) is the industry grouping that accounts for the most employment. Additionally, finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (16.9%), professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (16.7%), and retail trade (12.8%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Cohasset was \$84,156 (up 33.7% from \$62,933 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$42,909. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 52.4% more per year than females.

The average family in Cohasset consisted of 3.16 persons. With respect to poverty, 1.2% of families (down from 1.3% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 2.8% of individuals were below the US Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239 through \$35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 200b). In 2000, 10.3% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Cohasset had a total of 2,805 housing units of which 95.3% were occupied and 83.0% were detached one unit homes. Nearly 40% (38.2%) of these homes were built before 1940. There were no mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc. in this area; 78.5% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$389,500. Of vacant housing units, 40.2% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 14.6% were renter occupied.

Government

The town of Cohasset has an open town meeting form of government which is overseen by an Executive Secretary and a Board of Selectmen (State of Massachusetts 2007).

Fishery involvement in government

Cohasset has a Harbor Committee which consists of nine members who are appointed by the town Selectmen. Two of these members are representatives of the commercial fishermen in the town. The objective of the Harbor Committee is to make recommendations concerning the

operation of the Harbor (State of Massachusetts 2007). The Cohasset Harbor Health Committee conducted a study in 2005 to assess the degradation of the harbor (State of Massachusetts 2006).

Institutional

Fishing associations

Although no information concerning fishery association in Cohasset could be found at this time, there are associations in near by Scituate. The [Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association](#) is located in Scituate; this organization represents the interests of commercial lobstermen throughout Massachusetts. The South Shore Lobstermen's Association is located in Marshfield (Michaud 2005). The "Friends of Cohasset Harbor" is a group formed of Cohasset fishermen, residents, and community leaders dedicated to preserving the harbor's infrastructure (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

The Massachusetts Fisherman's Partnership focuses on issues for fishermen in different ports in Massachusetts. The Partnership responded to the need of health care for fishermen and their families by developing the Fishing Partnership Health Insurance Plan with federal and state aid. This plan has been in place since 1997 and reduces the amount of money that fishermen's families have to pay to be covered by health insurance (Michaud 2005).

Fishing assistance centers

Information on fishery assistance centers in Cohasset is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related organizations

The [Student Center for Coastal Research](#) (CSCR) is located in Cohasset. The center is "an environmental education and research center for students promoting stewardship of our unique coastal resources." CSCR students are lead by professional partners from state and environmental agencies such as CZM. CSCR students collect, analyze, and report data needed in the community to assess water quality issues.⁷ The [Cohasset Maritime Institute](#) (CMI) is a rowing organization which also promotes maritime education. CMI is currently engaged in a campaign to restore boatbuilding programs in Cohasset. CSCR and CMI contribute to an increased community awareness of harbor history and harbor issues.⁸ The headquarters of the [Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary](#) are located in nearby Scituate; the Sanctuary Advisory Council includes fishermen, and the activities of the Sanctuary can affect fishing in Scituate and other communities.

Physical

Cohasset is located in the Greater Boston area of eastern Massachusetts and is bordered by Hingham on the west, Hull on the Northwest, Scituate on the south and east and the Atlantic Ocean on the North. It lies about 20 miles southeast of Boston. The major highways in Cohasset are 3A and 228. Rail service to Cohasset is currently under construction however Boston is accessible via the Red line from nearby towns. As a member of the MBTA, The RIDE is available to elderly and disabled passengers and bus service is available to Boston. The closest

⁷ Profile review comments, Jack Buckley, Center for Student Coastal Research, 40 Parker Ave., Cohasset, MA, October 12, 2006

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airport is the Marshfield Airport (State of Massachusetts 2007).

The Cohasset Lobster Pound and the Mill River Marine Railway are adjacent to the public landing in Cohasset. The railway is where most fishing vessels are hauled out for maintenance. Fuel and bait are both delivered to Cohasset's town wharf (Michaud 2005).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁹

Commercial

It was reported in 2004 that Cohasset Harbor is home to approximately forty commercial fishing vessels. At that time "Fishermen of Cohasset are facing the probable loss of their only buyer and their marine railway; they do not feel valued by their community." In addition dramatic increases in rent at the marina seriously threatened fishermen in the community (Michaud 2005).

Lobster composes the largest percentage of landings in Cohasset by a significant margin, followed by species in the "Other" category (see Table 1). The number of home port vessels varied from a low of 10 in 1998 to a high of 15 in several years (see Table 2). However, in only two years (2003 and 2005) was there any home port landings recorded for Cohasset. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries reported 24 commercial lobstermen fishing out of Cohasset in 2006. Cohasset was ranked 13th in the state in catch (pounds) for state landings.¹⁰

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Other ¹¹	2

(Note: Only rank value is provided because value information is confidential in ports with fewer than three vessels or fewer than three dealers, or where one dealer predominates in a particular species and would therefore be identifiable.)

⁹ In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

¹⁰ Data provided by William Adler, Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, 8 Otis Place, Scituate, MA 02066, September 5, 2007

¹¹ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

Vessels by Year¹²

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	11	15
1998	10	11
1999	11	9
2000	13	11
2001	15	12
2002	15	10
2003	13	9
2004	13	9
2005	15	10
2006	15	9

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport,
Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹³)

Recreational

[MTCFISH](#) is one of the fishing charter companies out of Cohasset. Located at the Cohasset Harbor Marina, they have a 23' power boat and specialize in Stripper but offer fishing for other species as well. There are about 475 recreational vessels in Cohasset (Michaud 2005).

Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Cohasset is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

FUTURE

There are plans in the works to expand and improve the waterfront in Cohasset (State of Massachusetts 2007). In addition, as of 2004 there were plans to rework the area used to unload by commercial fishermen. The marine railway is likely to disappear, and the lobster pound will likely move to Hingham. In 2006 the motion to add \$10,000 worth of new docks in Cohasset Harbor was passed (Michaud 2005).

In 2004, "a grassroots group calling themselves 'Friends of Cohasset Harbor' and consisting of interested resident, fishermen and community leader has been formed. The goal of the group is to preserve the harbor infrastructure. The 'Friends' will attempt to convince the Town to purchase the property and to retain the property's use as a lobster pound and boat yard" (Michaud 2005).

¹² Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

¹³ The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

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